

Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana

Date **March 3, 2011**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary A. Balsamo, State Public Health Veterinarian; Aristide Marshall, Registered Sanitarian**

Name of Facility **Plaquemines Parish Animal Shelter**

There are several state laws that set minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities, and quarantine facilities. They include (Title 3, Chapter 17, Louisiana R.S. 2431 et seq.)

La. R.S. 2431 to 2439, Humane society may arrange for care of animals; Arrangement with stable for care of animals; Employment of veterinary; Stable to register animals cared for; Determination whether animal may leave stable; Sale of animal on owner's failure to pay for treatment; Liability of society to stable or veterinary; privilege upon animals; Opportunity to owner to treat animal if proper treatment is given; Court review of humane society's treatment of animal, damages limited to costs

La. R.S. 2461 to 2465, Authority of parish governing authorities to adopt, Definitions, General shelter standards, Shelter construction, Operating procedures.

La. R.S. 2471 to 2476 Definitions, Sterilization required, Adoption standards, Confirmation of sterilization, Exceptions, Fees

La. R.S. Branding of animals impounded

La. R. S. 1558(3), Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians

Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III, The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases

You should familiarize yourself with these laws and any requirements that may pertain to your facility or its employees.

Many features and practices that enhance facility operations for the animals or the facility staff are not addressed in the above statutes. LAWC considers the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Animal Control Association, and the Humane Society of the United States in shelter evaluations. The list below should be retained and utilized for self evaluations on a routine basis. This list contains features and practices that strengthen facility operations. Some are required by law (these are labeled as "**MANDATED**") and are reiterated in this supplement as a reinforcement of their requirement.

LAWC Comments and suggestions are added under each item in the assessment.

A. Animal Euthanasia

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Have staff who perform euthanasia successfully completed a **MANDATED** Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine-approved euthanasia training course

within 120 days of initial employment and earned the required 6 hours of continuing education credits annually?

At present all euthanasia procedures are carried out by a contract parish veterinarian.

2. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for the euthanasia of ill or injured animals in the field or before the end of the impoundment period?

At present the euthanasias are carried out LASPCA. Animals are transferred to the LASPCA facility in Orleans Parish. Future plans are to contract with a local veterinarian to carry out euthanasias.

3. ☒Y ☐N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?
See A2.

Questions 4-10 are for facilities using injectable euthanasia:

4. ☐Y ☐N If a written protocol is available, does the protocol require two or more people to be present to perform injectable euthanasia techniques?
NA

5. ☒Y ☐N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?

6. ☒Y ☐N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?

7. ☒Y ☐N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?

8. ☒Y ☐N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?

The controlled drugs are secured properly by a licensed veterinarian.

9. ☒Y ☐N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?

The veterinarian also performs field euthanasia and keeps controlled drugs in a locked toolbox in the locked vehicle until time of use.

10. ☒Y ☐N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?

Question 11 is for facilities using carbon monoxide euthanasia:

11. ☐Y ☐N Does the carbon monoxide chamber meet standards for safe operation and is the machine in good working order?
NA

B. Management:

1. ☒Y ☐N Has the facility manager successfully completed a Louisiana Animal Control Association-approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course?

2. ☒Y ☐N Is an office available at the facility, or elsewhere, for facility staff and/or animal control officers?

Office furniture is presently on order, however the office space is available.

3. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility attended by a veterinarian or is there a relationship established with one or more local veterinarians to provide advice, assistance, or treatment to animals?

4. ☐Y ☒N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian

5. ☐Y ☒N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?
No formal program of local inspection exists.
6. ☐Y ☒N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?
There are written procedures for cleaning and housing. Other protocols are currently being created.
7. ☒Y ☐N Are animals separated by their behavior and age in addition to their state of health, species, sex, and size (separation by health, age (puppies and kittens separated from adults) species, sex (unneutered males separated from females) is **MANDATED** by law)?
Under present shelter procedures, all animals are housed individually.
8. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a sterilization program for its adopted animals (this is **MANDATED** for animal control facilities under La. R.S. 2472)?
Adoptions are handled through a public/private partnership with PAWS (Plaquemines Animal Welfare Society) and all adopted animals are spayed or neutered prior to adoption.
9. ☒Y ☐N Have staff been immunized against rabies?
The staff is presently being vaccinated.
10. ☒Y ☐N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
Animal contact staff have trapped coyotes and other wild animals.
11. ☐Y ☒N Are staff rabies vaccinations evidenced by adequate titers (This is only recommended if bats are handled routinely. This is also recommended if terrestrial wildlife are handled routinely in skunk variant rabies endemic areas of the state)?
This is a new shelter, so no program is presently in place. Should a vaccine program be instituted in the future, every-two-year titers can be provided by:

*Atlanta Health Associates
309 Pirckle Ferry Road, Suite D300
Cumming, GA 30040
Phone: 770-205-9091 or 800-717-5612
Fax: 770-204-9021
www.atlantahealth.net (<http://www.atlantahealth.net>)*

*Kansas State University
1800 Denison Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66506-5600
Phone: 785-532-4483
www.vet.ksu.edu/depts/dmp/service/rabies/index.htm
(<http://www.vet.ksu.edu/depts/dmp/service/rabies/index.htm>)*

12. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?
13. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?
14. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter sell or donate live animals for education or research?

15. ☐Y ☒N Was this sheriff a plaintiff or defendant in any civil or criminal court case in the past year?
16. ☐Y ☒N Are shelter standards included in city or parish ordinances?
Although the Plaquemines Parish Animal Shelter abides by ordinances in issues related to stray animals, impoundment, and rabies control; shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinance. Local government officials are strongly urged to include shelter standards in local ordinances.
17. ☐Y ☒N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?
This is a new facility and hours and emergency phone numbers, as well as hours of operation were not posted at the facility at the time of the inspection, however the building is NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Plans are in place to provide the required information on signs prior to opening.
18. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have a receiving area for the public to bring in or adopt animals?
19. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?

C. Records:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are records computerized?
2. ☒Y ☐N Do the animal records include accurate descriptions of the animals? Suggested information includes: impounding officer's name, date and time of capture, location of capture, tag and/or collar identification, breed, sex, age, size (height and weight), coat color and pattern, ear and tail types, description of markings and unusual findings (scars, tattoos, microchips), and the condition of the animal.
3. ☐Y ☒N Do the animals' records document daily observation?
4. ☒Y ☐N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?
All animals scheduled for euthanasia are re-scanned prior to the procedure.

D. General Structure:

1. ☐Y ☒N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?
The area for offloading animals upon arrival at the facility is open. The opportunity for animals, particularly cats, to escape is a risk. The shelter, however, does minimize the risk by ONLY transferring cats from vehicles in "transfer" cages.
2. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility built in such a way that it prevents access by unauthorized persons?
All doors to the outside lock securely.

3. ☐Y ☒N Is a secure area for storing vehicles available?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is a secure area for storing outdoor equipment available?
5. ☒Y ☐N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?
6. ☒Y ☐N Are drains covered with grates to prevent people from stepping into them?
7. ☒Y ☐N Are there problems apparent with drainage or moisture at this facility?
There are some areas with standing water, however management is aware of the problem and all will be corrected by the builder.

E. Water and Electric Power:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are an adequate number of water faucets available?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are the water hoses strong and in good repair?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are adequate hose bibs and hoses available?
4. ☐Y ☒N Are hoses kept off the floor when not in use?
Inspectors observed several hoses on the ground in outside exercise areas. LAWC recommends that devices that retract hoses or other devices for storage be utilized to secure hoses off of the ground. Shelter management assured the inspectors that plans are in place to do so.
5. ☒Y ☐N Is hot water available?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is a backup generator available to provide electricity during power outages?
Portable generators are available to keep refrigerator/freezer and other small appliances/equipment functional in case of an emergency. however the entire facility will not be powered.
7. ☐Y ☒N In the animal areas, are the electrical outlets mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor?
In outside exercise areas receptacles are only 24 inches from the ground, however all receptacles are adequately covered.
8. ☒Y ☐N In the animal areas, do the electrical outlets have protective coverings?
9. ☒Y ☐N Are the electrical outlets, in areas of water use, Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected?
10. ☒Y ☐N Are there adequate sinks to wash food and water bowls and other equipment?
11. ☒Y ☐N If a bathtub or large sink is used to bathe animals or wash equipment, is there adequate toe space under it to allow staff to work comfortably?
Bathing facilities are only available on the PAWS (adoption) side of the facility. This could present a problem if animals in the holding or observation period are soiled and require cleaning.
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a restroom for staff use?

F. Waste Disposal:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
The freezer, at present, is extremely small, and may approach capacity when the facility is at full operational level.
3. ☒Y ☐N Do the dog pen floors slope ¼-½ inch per foot toward drains and gutters?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is animal waste washed into a sewer or septic system?
5. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter employ special practices for handling medical or potentially infectious waste?

G. Storage:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?
2. ☐Y ☒N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?
Inspectors noted that some cleaning chemicals stored in the same area (on the same shelf) as food products. Separate storage areas for cleaning products and other chemicals are recommended. When this degree of separation is not possible, care should be taken to store food products above and as far removed from chemicals as possible.
3. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?
4. ☐Y ☒N Is the food storage area clean and free of spilled food?
The food storage area on the animal shelter side of the facility was littered with construction equipment and supplies. These types of material and equipment should be stored separate from food. Plans are in place to remove the construction materials prior to the official opening of the building. Minor "punch list" construction is continuing at present. The food storage area on the PAWS side was not sealed against potential infestation by rodents and other vermin. It is recommended that PAWS consult with shelter management or with LAWC to improve food storage methods.
5. ☒Y ☐N Is there a procedure to use older food first?
6. ☒Y ☐N Are storage shelves and racks at least 12 inches off the floor and at least 4 inches from walls to permit adequate air circulation around food products?
7. ☒Y ☐N Are food storage containers adequately sealed against infestation by insects or other vermin?
There is a contract for pest control.

H. Primary Enclosures:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is one dog housed per pen?
2. ☒Y ☐N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?

Walls extend to six feet in height.

4. ☐Y ☒N Do the pens have tops on them?

5. ☐Y ☐N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?

NA

6. ☐Y ☒N Does the chain-link fencing of the dog pens appear to be at least 9-gauge wire (heavier than typical fences)?

Exterior fencing appears to be some type of plastic coated 1" mesh hardware cloth material. The fencing appears to be of adequate strength, however the fence sagged in several areas. The fencing appears to require more posts or standards to reinforce fencing. Fencing is very low along some outdoor walkways. This may present opportunities for unwanted contact between animals across fences.

7. ☒Y ☐N Is the dog-pen fencing securely attached to the frames and gates?

8. ☒Y ☐N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?

9. ☒Y ☐N Are guillotine doors present between the indoor and outdoor runs?

Several cages for dogs are equipped with guillotine doors

10. ☒Y ☐N If guillotine doors are present, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?

11. ☒Y ☐N Do the gates on the cages and pens latch securely?

12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a way to prevent the general public from entering the animal containment area without the knowledge of facility staff?

13. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures constructed of materials that are easily sanitized?

Although all primary enclosures are constructed of easily sanitized materials, some of the wooden fencing is unpainted, which may render the surfaces porous and could permit the accumulation of potentially dangerous organic debris. Painting these surfaces with non-toxic paints would significantly reduce porosity. The same is true for unfinished wooden surfaces in the outdoor cat colony on the PAWS side of the facility.

14. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures well maintained and in good repair?

I. Feeding/ Watering:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?

2. ☒Y ☐N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?

3. ☒Y ☐N Are food and water bowls washed and sanitized daily?

4. ☒Y ☐N Are shelves or racks present to store food and water containers that are drying?

J. Pest Control:

1. ☒Y ☐N Is the premise maintained so that the potential for rodents and insect pests are kept to a minimum?
2. ☐Y ☒N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?
Animals entering any shelter facility should be screened for external parasites and, if possible, should be treated with some type of internal or external paraciticide prior to entering the general population. Insecticidal shampoos, sprays and dips are available. Internal medication may also be used.
3. ☐Y ☐N If a program exists, does the product's label include the target species?
 NA
4. ☐Y ☐N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasitocides?
 NA

K. Rabies Quarantine

1. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility quarantine animals for rabies observation? *If "no," skip the remainder of this section.*
2. ☒Y ☐N Is it easy to distinguish which animals are quarantined for rabies observation and which animals are housed in quarantine pens due to "overflow"?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is public access prohibited from the quarantine area by a secure door or gate?
4. ☐Y ☐N If a secure door or gate is not available, is there a barrier to exclude the public from the quarantine area?
 NA
5. ☒Y ☐N Are there guillotine doors to confine rabies-suspect dogs in one part of the pen during cleaning or inclement weather?
6. ☒Y ☐N If guillotine doors are available, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?
7. ☒Y ☐N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
8. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?

L. Disease: regarding the following diseases, please rate the severity of the problem with these diseases over the past year.

The shelter is new and very little or no experience with the following diseases was indicated; therefore questions 1 through 10 in section L were left blank.

1. ☐Major ☐Minor ☒No problem Intestinal parasites
2. ☐Major ☒Minor ☐No problem Scabies (mange)

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Ringworm (dermatophytes) |
| 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Parvovirus |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine distemper |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine cough |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline diarrhea |
| 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Canine heartworm disease |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem | Feline leukemia |

M. Infection Control

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Are all animals isolated on intake to this facility and screened in a separate area for disease and temperament before being placed in the general population?
All incoming animals are screened and are placed in three categories of housing after screening: 1) healthy hold - all animals that appear healthy and are not being held due to some type of aggressive activity, 2) rabies or bite quarantine, or 3) isolation due to an illness or injury.
2. ☐ Y ☒ N Are all animals vaccinated (Dogs: distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus, leptospirosis, bordetella. Cats: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, panleukopenia, feline leukemia) upon intake to the facility?
3. ☒ Y ☐ N Are all animals vaccinated after being determined to be adoptable?
PAWS administers vaccinations.
4. ☐ Y ☒ N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
- a. ☒ Y ☐ N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)
PAWS checks for heartworms.
5. ☐ Y ☒ N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
Consideration of implementation of parasite control on ALL incoming animals should be considered. Lack of intestinal parasite control may prove to result in greater rates of transmission to animals that will eventually be adopted.
- a. ☒ Y ☐ N (only adoptable are dewormed for intestinal parasites)
PAWS deworms all animals available for adoption.
6. ☒ Y ☐ N Are rabies vaccines administered at this facility?
PAWS administers rabies vaccines in all animals that are adopted.
7. ☐ Y ☐ N Are rabies vaccines required after pets are adopted out of the facility?
NA

N. Population Control

1. ☒ Y ☐ N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
2. ☐ Y ☐ N Are only some animals spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
NA
3. ☐ Y ☐ N Are intact animals that are adopted required to be spayed or neutered after adoption?
NA

Additional comments:

The shelter for Plaquemines Parish represents both the best of public/private partnerships (in this case, the shelter partners with the Plaquemines Animal Welfare Society (PAWS). The vaccination, infection control and adoption programs are administered by PAWS.

The physical facility features some of the latest admirable characteristics of shelter housing and promotes the comfort and the safety of both animals and caretakers. Examples of the shelters excellent facilities are...

- Size and layout of the facility
- Outdoor gravel exercise areas where waste from dogs is removed a minimum of once per day
- Guillotine doors for dogs that lead into outdoor areas for exercise
- Specially equipped "squeeze cages" for cats
- Cage materials that facilitate sanitation
- Special custodial storage areas
- Adequate sinks provided throughout
- Windows that provide natural lighting in several animal housing areas
- Adequate shade provided in all outdoor housing areas
- Spay/neuter clinic on PAWS side of facility
- Separate entrances to animal control, adoptive and spay/neuter facilities
- Break room for employees
- Conference room for meetings and trainings
- Rooms for familiarization of potential adopters with animals
- Communal cat area with glasses for viewing
- HVAC and ventilation in the facility
- Easily sanitized work tables and surfaces
- Grooming and bathing facilities

Garbage and waste handling procedures at the facility are excellent. All garbage is collected and stored in covered bins that are lined with plastic waste bags.

Communal cat areas or colonies are excellent methods of housing healthy cats, especially those intended for adoption. LAWC recommends the following procedures for communal cat housing:

- Large pens or rooms used for cat colonies should be maintained in the same manner as cages; disinfected regularly and limited to a fixed population of cats.
- Cats should be isolated and observed for two weeks prior to entrance into the colony.
- Cats should also be tested for contagious disease (parasite check, feline leukemia test, physical exam)

- Prospective inhabitants should be vaccinated for rabies, feline viral rhinotracheitis, *Calicivirus*, *Chlamydia*, pneumonitis and feline leukemia virus one week prior to entry into the colony.
- Sick or injured animals should be removed from the colony immediately.

A method to clean towels and other shelter linens is necessary to promote hygiene in the facility. At the time of the inspection, the laundry was not fully functional.

Inspectors were impressed with the size of the operation and the capacity for housing and offering for adoption large numbers of animals. Inspectors were also very pleased with the conditions and maintenance of the facility; however OPH inspectors are concerned with the relatively small staff for such a large facility. Plaquemines Parish authorities should consider addition of animal contact employees to reduce stress among employees, increase efficiency of operations, and eliminate potential for mistakes or procedural breakdowns due to lack of staffing.

RATING:

- ☐ Generally exceeds standards
- ☒ Meets standards
- ☐ Needs significant improvements to meet standard

Brian Melius, DVM : 
Chairman, Shelter Inspection Subcommittee
LAWC

Date: 8-3-11